

**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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**3768. Ms T P Msane (EFF) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

Noting that the Republic has been elected to a three – year term in the United Nations Human Rights Council, what meaningful (a) contributions and (b) decisions will the Republic make regarding the instabilities caused by the western powers on the African continent?

**Reply:**

1. On 11 October 2022, South Africa was voted overwhelmingly by United Nations (UN) member states to take a seat in the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) beginning 1 January 2023 for the next period of three years (2023-2025). In support of its campaign, South Africa submitted pledges to the UN General Assembly detailing what meaningful contributions the country would make, namely, to work with other countries in the Council to promote and advance human rights globally; to ensure that the mandate of the Council (to promote human rights) is kept intact and that the Council is not ‘manipulated’ by other countries to promote their own political objectives (politicisation and securitisation of human rights); to ensure that the Council pays equal attention to all human rights (civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights); and that the agenda items dealing with the fight against racism and the self-determination of the Palestinian people, amongst other issues, are kept intact and their objectives promoted. Consistent with our constitutional commitment, South Africa intends to take its rightful place as a sovereign and responsible state in the HRC to contribute to the development of norms and standards in the field of human rights that will promote global cooperation, multilateralism, peaceful resolution of conflicts, women empowerment, and a system of interstate relations based on agreed rules (respect for the rule of international law) and not brute economic and military force.
2. With regard to decisions South Africa will make in the HRC regarding the instabilities caused by the western powers on the African continent, it should be noted that issues of peace and security are addressed by the UN, primarily through the UN Security Council and the General Assembly and not in the HRC. South Africa is opposed to the idea (which idea is cherished by some big powers) of “securitisation of human rights,” meaning, the use of human rights to achieve political-security objectives.

It is trite, that some of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council (P5) members try to bypass the Security Council (in order to avoid a situation where their resolutions would be vetoed by other P5 members) and use institutions such as the HRC (where no country has veto rights) to pursue their narrow political-security objectives. In this regard, South Africa will continue playing a key role in the HRC, particularly in the ongoing discussions aimed at considering how the activities of private military and security companies (PMSCs), transnational corporations (TNCs) and other business enterprise (OBEs) can be regulated to ensure that these entities do not violate human rights, and where human rights violations are detected, which flow from the activities of these entities. that accountability and redress are fostered.